

# CHISAGO SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

## BOOKS FOR SALE

The Chisago SWCD currently has a number of various nature books available for sale. They are beautiful spiral bound books with color photos, with prices ranging from \$9.95 to \$19.95 + tax. The titles are as follows:

Lakescaping for Wildlife and Water Quality, \$19.95. This book will show you how to plan and plant a diverse natural lakeshore landscape.

Woodworking for Wildlife, \$9.95. This book includes detailed plans to build homes for those birds that live in your yard, as well as tips on how you can attract different species of birds and mammals to your yard.

Wild About Birds, \$19.95. This book is a DNR Bird Feeding Guide. Learn what birds prefer to eat and how they like to eat it. This book contains construction plans for building bird feeders from simple to intricate.

Landscaping for Wildlife, \$10.95. This book is a landowners guide to developing backyard, farm, and woodlot habitats for wildlife in the Midwest.

## F. WILLARD & JEANETTE CARLSON CHOSEN AS LOCAL CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR FOR 2003

This past year the Chisago Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) chose F. Willard & Jeanette Carlson as the District's Outstanding Conservationist of the Year for 2003.

F. Willard & Jeanette Carlson were also chosen as the Outstanding Conservationist for Area III (13 Counties). Minnesota's Outstanding Conservationist Award is a way for SWCD's to recognize individuals and organizations for outstanding accomplishments in implementing conservation practices and improving Minnesota's natural resources.

According to Roland Cleveland, Board Supervisor, Chisago SWCD, F. Willard & Jeanette Carlson have been recognized for a variety of reasons. The following is a summary of some of those reasons.

While actively farming, the Carlson's implemented minimum tillage, installed field wind-breaks, riparian buffer strips and filter strips. They also enrolled the more sensitive areas of their cropland into either the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) or the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) easement program.

Since retiring the Carlson's have taken a very conservative-minded approach in the development of their property. Mr. Carlson is the lead person in each of the developments. He looks at the land, and with assistance, has formed developments that allow them to sell the property while maintaining the natural state of the land. The Sunrise Trails development was the first large Planned Unit Development within Chisago County.

"We're really proud of Willard & Jeanette and what they have done for conservation in Chisago County," said Cleveland. "They have been an example of successful conservation farming and now in retirement they continue the ethic and the commitment through development plans that focus on land stewardship. This is leadership all of Minnesota can be proud of."



## PLANTING TODAY FOR A GREENER TOMORROW

If we can measure ecological progress by the numbers, Chisago County SWCD's Tree Program certainly qualifies as a success... at least in the establishment of trees and shrubs on our farms and in our communities. Over the past five years, Chisago County residents have planted over a half million trees and shrubs through the District's tree program. Each year we have a large variety of trees and shrubs for sale during the spring season. Combinations of varieties provide colorful surroundings, shade for our living areas, protection from wind, and cover for wildlife.

All of our shrubs and many of the hardwood trees produce colorful blooms in the spring, some bearing fruit, as well as great fall color. Of course, the conifers provide green color year around. To ensure availability, you need to order your trees today! Simply visit our website at [www.chisagoswcd.org](http://www.chisagoswcd.org) or call 651/674-2333 for an order form. **Do not delay in placing your order to obtain the best selection!**

WE'RE ON THE WEB:  
[www.chisagoswcd.org](http://www.chisagoswcd.org)

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## COULD MY DYING OAKS HAVE OAK WILT?

Oak wilt, caused by a fungus, is responsible for killing large numbers of oaks annually in Chisago County. Oaks are undoubtedly the most valuable and plentiful of our shade trees. In contrast to Dutch Elm disease, which has been very difficult to control, oak wilt is easier to control and the valuable oak forest resources saved.

Red oaks, such as Northern Red Oak and Northern Pin Oak, wilt quickly. After symptoms first appear (the wilt fungus can be in an oak for 2-3 weeks without leaf symptoms) a red oak will wilt completely in 2-6 weeks. White oaks die slowly, a branch at a time, often surviving for many years.

The oak wilt fungus spreads in two ways: underground and over-land. Most new infections are the result of the fungus moving underground from infected to healthy oaks via grafted root systems. Trees as far as 50 feet apart may be grafted together. The only way for oak wilt to infect overland is via insects, primarily the picnic beetle. Picnic beetles are attracted to sweet smelling spore mats produced by the oak wilt fungus only on red oaks. Overland spread infects healthy oaks that are within ¼ mile of red oaks that died within the last 1 to 1 ½ years. New infections of both red and white oaks happen when the picnic beetle brings oak wilt spores from the dead red oak to FRESH wounds on a healthy oak...BETWEEN April 15<sup>th</sup> and June



30<sup>th</sup>. These new infections are the first tree in what is called an infection center.

Stopping underground spread is the most important way of controlling oak wilt. This can be done by severing the roots with a vibratory plow or a cable plow with a 5-foot root cutting blade. Primary plow lines can actually stop disease spread and are located 1-2 healthy oaks away from the most recently infected oaks. In certain situations secondary lines are plowed; these lines are generally placed between the most recently infected oaks and the next healthy-looking oak.

Over-land spread of oak wilt can be prevented by following these guidelines: don't prune, wound, cut or injure oak trees between April 15<sup>th</sup> and June 30<sup>th</sup>. If oaks are accidentally wounded, or pruning is unavoidable, cover the wound(s) immediately (within minutes) with one of the preferred materials such as a water-based paint or shellac.

Cost sharing assistance for controlling the spread of oak wilt is available through Chisago County. If you think your oaks are dying of oak wilt and are interested in controlling its spread on your property, you should contact the Chisago SWCD office in North Branch.

## NEWLY RELEASED DIGITIZED CHISAGO COUNTY COOPERATIVE SOIL SURVEY

The Chisago County Cooperative Soil Survey is an inventory of the different kinds of soil in the county. Maps with descriptive and interpretive materials in the published soil survey describe favorable and unfavorable soil properties for various uses. The Chisago County survey was initiated in 1982. The funding to provide the survey came from federal, state and local funds. The County Commissioners, the Chisago SWCD, and the MN Agricultural Extension Service signed a cooperative agreement with the NRCS to complete the soil survey.

Soil scientists walk over the land and examine the soil with an auger to a depth of about five feet. As they examine each auger full of soil, the soil scientist records the properties that affect its use and management. After determining the extent or area of a specific kind of soil, the soil scientist marks its exact location on an aerial photograph. When all soils in a county are mapped and properties described, the maps and other information are assembled into a publication called a soil survey.

The field work and map compilation for the Chisago County survey was completed in 1989. The published soil survey report was completed and distributed in 1991. Examples of information that can be queried from the database include: building site development, depth to water table, engineering uses, available water capacity, soil reaction, salinity, flooding, depth to bedrock, cropland, woodland, rangeland, pastureland, wildlife and recreational development. The survey can be used by numerous groups and individuals such as: developers, realtors, appraisers, farmers, homeowners, government agencies, tax assessors, bankers and contractors.

The Chisago County survey has now been digitized for use with geographic information systems. A copy of the digitized survey may be downloaded from [www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov), or a hard copy may be picked up at the NRCS office.

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## WILDLIFE HABITAT INCENTIVES PROGRAM

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is a cost share program for people who want to develop and improve wildlife habitat on private lands. It provides both technical and financial assistance to help improve fish and wildlife habitat. "This is an opportunity for landowners to participate in a cost effective, voluntary program to improve fish and wildlife resources on their property," according to Michelle Wohlers, District Conservationist.

Some of the opportunities include: restoration and management of native grasses and wildflowers; plant native trees and shrubs; improve forestland and brushland; streambank protection and fish habitat improvement; establish and renovate farmstead shelterbelts.



Eligible participants include those individuals who own or have control of at least 5 acres under consideration. "Participants with accepted applications agree to prepare and implement a wildlife habitat development plan. "The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offers participants technical and financial assistance for the establishment of wildlife habitat development practices. USDA and the participant enter into a cost-share agreement. This agreement generally lasts from 5 to 10 years. Under the agreement, the landowner agrees to install and maintain the WHIP practices. USDA agrees to provide technical assistance and pay up to 75% of the cost of installing the wildlife practices. Landowners maintain control of the land, and no public access is required." WHIP does not provide rental income or purchase easements.

In addition, if the landowner agrees, cooperating Federal and State wildlife agencies and nonprofit or private organizations may provide expertise or additional funding to help complete a project.

Applications for WHIP technical and financial assistance are accepted on a continuous basis, with approvals made periodically throughout the year. For more information about WHIP, and eligible wildlife habitat practices, contact the NRCS office at 651-674-7160 ext 3, or on the World Wide Web at [www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov).

## CONTINUOUS CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM

(CCRP) - promotes a continuous signup for cropland, and in some cases pastureland, into specific environ-

mental priority practices. Some practices include grass filter strips and riparian forest buffers adjacent to flowing waters or wetlands, wetland restorations on farmed wetlands, and/or strategically placed trees and shrubs (windbreaks) on cropland to protect homes, livestock, driveways and public roadways from excessive snow drifting and provide thermal protection. One can also install new-grassed waterways and outlets to protect cropland from gully erosion with the CCRP. All of the above practices are considered buffer practices which means they are strategically placed vegetative practices to "buffer" the effects of wind and water, especially when it involves erosion and sedimentation processes. Features include up to 90% cost sharing for cover establishment, annual rental payments, ten to fifteen year contracts, and a noncompetitive signup process.

## ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Minnesota received an allocation of \$23 million for 2004. Sign ups are being taken continuously, with a scoring cutoff of March 22, 2004. Chisago County received \$270,000 to allocate to agricultural producers in the form of cost sharing and incentive payments for specified land management and structural conservation practices. Livestock related management practices, tillage practices, forestry, and wildlife habitat restoration are all part of the docket of eligible practices that can be utilized to implement a conservation plan cost-shared through this program. Contact the NRCS for conservation planning to take advantage of any funding opportunities.

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## WE'VE MOVED...

You may have noticed that our old office building located by the Tanger Mall has been destroyed. We have moved across the freeway, to the building that is located on the South side of Highway 95 across from the North Branch Main Street School.

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## BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

**Craig Mold**.....Dist. #1 (Fish Lake, Nessel and Rushseba)  
**Roland Cleveland**...Dist. #2 (N. Branch, Harris and Lent)  
**Mary Ann Jay**.....Dist. #3 (Amador and Sunrise)  
**Joan Barnes**.....Dist. #4 (Chisago Lakes and Wyoming)  
**Joseph Eichten**.....Dist. #5 (Franconia and Shafer)

District Staff, 651/674-2333

**Craig Mell**, District Administrator

**Susan Humble**, Administrative Assistant

**Jason Rehn**, District Technician

Assisted by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service  
651/674-7160 ext. 3

**Michelle Wohlers**, District Conservationist

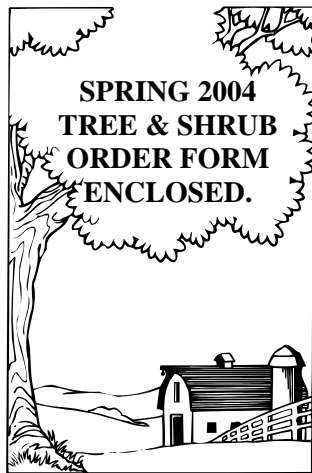
Board meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at the AG Service Center, 38814 Third Avenue, North Branch.

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CHISAGO SOIL & WATER  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
38814 THIRD AVENUE  
NORTH BRANCH, MN 55056

PRESORTED STANDARD  
US POSTAGE PAID  
NORTH BRANCH, MN 55056  
PERMIT NO. 147

## POSTAL PATRON



[www.chisagoswcd.org](http://www.chisagoswcd.org)

## THE BENEFITS OF A FOREST STEWARDSHIP PLAN

What will you do with your woodland? If you own forested land, you have a decision to make. You can do nothing, you can occasionally do things that generate income or improve the property's appearance, you can become a woodland steward by actively managing your land for personal benefits, while also protecting the quality of its natural resources (soil, water, wildlife, trees, and other plants) for future generations.

Woodlands are a renewable resource, but they require many years to mature. Decisions you make now about timber harvesting, tree planting, or pest control can influence the character of your woodland for the next century. In managing a woodland you need to plan for the long-term, because whatever you do – or don't do – will have long-term impacts.

A woodland stewardship plan will help you determine your personal objectives, avoid costly errors, make knowledgeable decisions, and evaluate your progress.

The first step in how to manage your woodland is to develop a list of objectives. What do you want from your woodland? How much do you want? When do you want it? Your management choices will be clearer if your objectives are specific. For example, "to improve the land for wildlife" may be too vague of an objective to guide you toward

sound decisions. On the other hand, an objective "such as to increase the number of deer on the property" may lead to some very specific management practices. Once you have the objectives set you will need to prioritize them.

The second step is to have a forester inventory your woodland to determine what resources you have. Since a forest is dominated by trees, an inventory usually assesses the tree species composition, stand density and age, and the tree's diameter, height, quality, and growth rate. Other resources also can be inventoried depending on your objectives. Working with a forester or other natural resource specialist, you can expand your inventory to assess wildlife and fish habitat or other renewable natural resources. For example, the inventory can identify important sites for wildlife breeding, nesting, feeding, and cover.

After you identify your objectives and have a forester inventory your woodland, consider all reasonable management practices that would help you meet your objectives. The forester will guide you in this process. Cost-share can be available for management practices if you qualify.

A forester can create a plan for you that will promote forestry management practices to fit around your objectives. For more information please contact the Chisago SWCD office in North Branch at 651/674-2333.